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Eating Can Be Fun

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

A broadcast by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. John Baker and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Wednesday, June 25, 1941, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, over stations associated with the NBC Blue Network.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

Here we are in Washington - a typical summer day .... which as everybody who knows summer weather in Washington knows is rather warm. And we've been having a rather warm little discussion here in the studio. In fact that quick switch from Chicago caught us right in the middle of it ... John Baker has just been telling Ruth Van Deman his ideas about food and nutrition and Ruth has been coming back with hers.

And, Ruth, maybe you'd like to pick it up right there.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

I want to be sure John has a chance to get everything off his chest, first.

KADDERLY:

John, your turn then.

JOHN BAKER:

Would it be fair if I pulled a pome on you?

KADDERLY:

If you don't pull your punches.

BAKER:

No, indeed. This was written by a man deeply moved. It's called Reaction to Nutrition.

VAN DEMAN:

All right I can take it.

BAKER:

Remember, you asked for it.

I've become quite apathetic  
Concerning matters dietetic.  
Nutrition talk has hurt my mood  
Until I can't enjoy my food.  
Everywhere I turn I see  
Words in praise of vitamin B  
Ascorbic acid and magnesium,  
To be absorbed by rule of thumb.  
Now understand I don't object  
To nourishment - I expect  
I've had my share and then some  
Of dishes palatable and handsome.

(over)

But the days have passed when food is food  
Whether baked or broiled or stewed;  
When I confront - a tender steak  
Of which I hope soon to partake  
It no longer is the same to me,  
Because I think of Vitamin E  
And protein in every bite  
And minerals to the left and right  
And thiamin and riboflavin --  
It's no wonder I'm misbehavin'  
And rebelling at the distant sound  
Of vitamins a-stomping round.  
I'm a rebel -- and I know it  
I've reached the stage where I must show it  
I'm moved to stump the nation  
Reaching men of every station  
This my slogan, I'll oft repeat---  
"Not how nourishing -- but is it good to eat?"

KADDERLY:

Well, you should feel better after that, John.

VAN DEMAN:

I see a sad, sad lack of Vitamin Z.

BAKER:

Vitamin Z? .... XYZ?

VAN DEMAN:

That's right. Z as in a buzz saw.

BAKER:

Never heard of it. What's Vitamin Z do for you?

VAN DEMAN:

Makes eating fun.

BAKER:

Then you're siding with me -- against the nutritionists?

VAN DEMAN:

Never.

BAKER:

Explain yourself then.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, you see, it works this way. The smart meal planner gets in all the vitamins and other things you need ... and sets them all before you ... in food that looks so good and tastes so good you eat it without ever thinking of whether or not it's nourishing.

BAKER:

Yes, but how about it when a man has to pick out his own meal? You've got us menfolks so vitamin conscious we don't know which way to turn.

VAN DEMAN:

You seemed to do pretty well by yourself when I saw you in the cafeteria the other day. Your tray wasn't exactly empty.

BAKER:

I didn't have anything on it I didn't like.

VAN DEMAN:

That's just it. Make it a point to like a lot of different kinds of food. Then if you know about food values, and what foods are rich in which values, you can make up an endless number of good meals. Let's see, what was it you had on your tray the other day?

BAKER:

Been too many meals since then -- I could never tell you now.

VAN DEMAN:

I remember a bowl of soup, with a lot of tomato in it.

BAKER:

Say, that was good soup too.

VAN DEMAN:

Surely, the cook who made it knew her business. She made a soup that was more than just something to fill you up. Beside the tomatoes I saw some chopped up meat in it, and okra, and other vegetables.

BAKER:

Your memory's better than mine. But I do remember I had a sandwich on whole wheat bread -- I like whole wheat bread -- and a dish of cold slaw.

VAN DEMAN:

Would it spoil the slaw for you if I said it was chock full of Vitamin C?

BAKER:

I eat cold slaw because I like it. And the greener the cabbage that makes the slaw, the better I like it.

VAN DEMAN:

Maybe I shouldn't mention that either, but the greener the leaf the more of other vitamins and minerals.

BAKER:

And another kind of green leaf I like is lettuce ... just plain lettuce ... a head of nice green crisp lettuce, cut in quarters, and salt shaken on it ... none of this fancy dressing, just salt.

VAN DEMAN:

That's the original definition of a salad ... a raw vegetable eaten with salt.

BAKER:

Maybe that's it - maybe I'm primitive ... maybe what I want is simple food.

VAN DEMAN:

Simple food - perfectly prepared. Maybe it will surprise you, but I know lots of home economics people who feel that way too ... They don't go in for fancy work in cooking. They work more on the food combination idea.

BAKER:

Food combination? You mean something that has a lot of flavor along with something on the mild side?

VAN DEMAN:

That's it. And something green and leafy along with something starchy. If you have an eye for color, you can make a picture meal, easy as anything. For instance, visualize a plate with a leafy green vegetable, a white potato, and a yellow carrot or a red tomato.

BAKER:

Green, white, yellow or red ... yes, that would look good. And it would taste good too.

VAN DEMAN:

You notice I'm not saying a thing about the green and yellow vegetables as a source of Vitamin A.

BAKER:

I notice that. But I also notice you keep carrying these food value ideas in the back of your head.

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly, I do. I'm sold to the idea of what good food can do for good health.

I wish we could have Mrs. Thelma Porter, of Michigan State College, here. You'd be interested to hear her tell about the nutrition class she teaches for men students in physical education.

BAKER:

Sure I would, if she manages to keep them from getting fed-up on vitamins.

VAN DEMAN:

She arranges for them to eat their vitamins.

BAKER:

You mean this is a cooking class too?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, they cook now and then. Once after they'd had a lecture on calories and were getting a little bored just figuring the calorie value of foods, they had

a waffle supper. They calculated the calories in the flour, and the eggs, and the butter, and so on, in the waffle batter. Then when they ate the waffles and began piling on the butter, and the bacon, and the sirup, they just naturally couldn't help thinking about calories and more calories.

BAKER:

I hope that didn't spoil anybody's appetite for waffles.

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly not. It just gave them a working knowledge of calories. Nobody could put anything over on them about calories after that.

BAKER:

Why aren't there more of these nutrition classes for men ... that is nutrition with waffles and other good food attached?

VAN DEMAN:

There are some. If you toured the schools and the colleges of the country, I think you'd find quite a number. But there's room for many more. Maybe you'd like to add that idea to your slogan when you stump the nation, "reaching men of every station."

BAKER:

I'll consider that.

VAN DEMAN:

And maybe you'd like to do what Mrs. Porter often has her class do - plan a menu for dinner ... something that's good to eat.

BAKER:

O. K. We'll start right now with a juicy steak.

VAN DEMAN:

Budget unlimited?

BAKER:

Not at all - budget very definitely limited. I get you. I'll make that chopped steak (hamburger) from a good piece of chuck off the forequarter.

VAN DEMAN:

Again I suppose I shouldn't say it, but you'll get just as much nourishment from the less tender cut.

BAKER:

And to go with the chopped steak, we'll have baked potatoes ... and green beans ... My, I wish it weren't so far to some good Indiana sweet corn.

VAN DEMAN:

You've got one starchy vegetable.

BAKER:

Well, what if I have?

VAN DEMAN:

One's generally enough for a meal. What about some of your favorite lettuce salad?

BAKER:

Good enough. Lettuce, with salt only for me, I'm not saying anybody else can't have any kind of dressing he or she wants.

VAN DEMAN:

What about dessert?

BAKER:

I'm torn between watermelon and peaches. I saw some early peaches in the market the other day.

VAN DEMAN:

Probably so. I understand it's going to be a big peach year.

BAKER:

I like to eat all the fruit I can while it's in season. I can see it makes meal planning easier too ... to use what's plentiful and cheap.

And on this nutrition business, you almost convinced me. Maybe it isn't so bad. In fact, I can see how it might be fun, if you make it a game to get all the minerals and vitamins you're supposed to have.

VAN DEMAN:

Now you've got it ... mind if I rewrite your pome, and put in the Vitamin Z?

BAKER:

Go to it.

VAN DEMAN:

To all matters dietetic  
I'm very sympathetic  
And from vitamins I never run  
'Cause they help to make the game of eating fun.

BAKER:

Maybe I'd better change my slogan -- "Nourishing and also good to eat."

KADDERLY:

Mind if I put my oar in here?

VAN DEMAN:

Delighted to have you, Wallace. You made up a pome too?

KADDERLY:

No, I'm no hand at the rhyming game ... What I'm interested in is ways to cook this good food you and John have been talking about.

VAN DEMAN:

Recipes not rhymes. We're with you. Here's a whole handful for you to tell our Farm and Home friends about.

KADDERLY:

"Cooking Beef According to the Cut." Fine. This tells how to cook chopped chuck (John's hamburger) as well as how to broil a T-bone steak?

VAN DEMAN:

It certainly does. How to make the less tender cuts tender.

KADDERLY:

And "Homemade Bread, Cake, and Pastry" ... we haven't mentioned this one in a long time.

(Ad lib offer "Cooking Beef According to the Cut," "Homemade Bread, Cake, and Pastry.")

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